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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Monday, August 19, 1935.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Weighty Conversation." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

I hope you won't mind starting this week with conversation on weighty matters. Heavy and light talk is on the program for today. That is, I'm about to answer some inquiries about reducing and gaining weight.

Most people don't seem to realize that weight is an indication of health. The lady who tips the scales way above average for her height and age, and also the girl whose weight is far below average -- these two both need to check on their health. Then, they need to do something to correct both health and poundage together. The overweights are usually the ones who are tempted to reduce by what looks like a quick and easy way, so they're the ones that so often run into danger. You only have to read the newspapers these days to learn how many people have run into trouble by taking dangerous reducing drugs. Now and then you also get a pathetic story of what happened to the girl who went on a dangerous diet.

If your weight results from some abnormal condition, then adjusting it is a physician's job. But with most people weight is a matter of diet. I know that both overweights and underweights disagree with this statement very often. I've heard roly-poly friends insist that they eat like birds. And I've also heard my thin friends assert that they eat like horses and can't gain an ounce. But there's more to adjusting your diet than just eating or not eating. What you eat counts as well as how much. And you also have to adjust your food to exercise and rest. In other words, you need to balance the amount of energy-giving foods you eat with the energy you expend. And when you once get the idea, it's not difficult.

Now, as we were saying, you can often cut down weight by the well-known starvation method. But your body won't profit by the process. You may gain more ills than you lose pounds during the process. The fact is that some reducing diets are good for you. And some are bad for you. As for the anti-fat preparations on the market today, some are harmless -- and worthless. And others are dangerous. Some are very dangerous indeed. Don't let the diet faddists fool you. And don't let boguiling advertisements, promising a slim figure overnight, lead you astray. The fact is that if you lose weight safely, you must do it slowly on the right diet.

Now, every diet, whether for a fat or a thin or just-right person needs a foundation of protective foods. You won't be safe unless you have enough protein, minerals and vitamins to keep your body in good running order. Yes, and even if you're overweight, you also need some energy foods, just plain calories -- but very few. The first rule of a safe recuding diet is: Go slow on calories, that is, cut down on fats, starches, sugars and all dishes high in any of these ingredients. But fill up on other foods -- those that don't build fat, especially the bulky foods. This is the way to avoid that empty feeling which so many people complain about when they start on a reducing diet.

Let's go into details, now, about a safe reducing diet. For the backbone of your three meals a day count on milk -- skim milk, cottage cheese and buttermilk; and on fruits and vegetables; and on lean meat, lean fish and eggs. Among the cereal foods, count on whole-grain products.

But count off, or reduce to the minimum, cream, butter, rich gravies, sauces and salad dressings, fat meats, olives, pastries, sweet desserts, rich cakes, cookies, and candy.

Finally, remember that rule about losing weight slowly and steadily. Don't feel discouraged if the scales fail to show a loss at once. Whatever you weigh is a total of both tissue and water, you know. And often the body holds water temporarily while it is using up the fatty tissue. Keep at your sensible reducing diet for 3 or 4 weeks before you expect any noticeable progress. And while you're dieting, keep up a good health routine of systematic exercise, rest, fresh air and sunshine. Of course, you'll let that exercise you take burn up body fat; you won't let it tempt you to break over your diet because of a bigger appetite.

Well, there are the high points of safe and successful dieting for the lady who is overweight.

Now for the girl who needs a little more padding. She also founds her diet on the protective foods but she eats more of everything and particularly of the fats, starches and sugars. She drinks plenty of rich milk with a good deal of cream in it. She seasons liberally with butter and sweets, and enjoys rich gravies, salad dressings and desserts. She adds a little jelly or marmalade to her meals and adds some candy and nuts now and then to her already well-balanced diet. She chooses the fatter meats too, such as pork, ham, and bacon and eats fat fish like salmon, sardines, herring and mackerel. She doesn't go in for much heavy exercise but takes enough to keep her in good condition with plenty of rest, fresh air and sunshine.

Safe, slow, and steady -- that's the way to reduce or to gain. Keep a well-balanced diet for a basis -- milk, fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs and some cereals. Then adjust the energy foods that you add to this base according to your weight.

If you want further details on these weighty matters, you're welcome to write to the Bureau of Home Economics, Washington, D. C.

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